

MAPPING REGIONAL STRUCTURES AS OUTLINED AND PRODUCED BY A SYSTEM OF MARRIAGE TIES

The Case of Kalotaszeg, a Reformed Presbyterian Hungarian Region in Transylvania, Romania

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Abstract: Kalotaszeg is a famous historic and ethnographic region in Transylvania (Romania) consisting of approximately 35–40 village communities. The region has raised considerable scholarly interest since its early discovery at the end of the 19th century. A constantly reoccurring focus of studies has been to outline the structure of the region. Although it was not our primary concern, when we started our social anthropology fieldwork at the beginning of the 1990s we soon encountered the problematic issue of how to delineate the external and internal boundaries around and within this multi-ethnic and multi-religious region and how to grasp in-group and out-group relations with a special regard to the context of socio-historical structure of the population in the area. We wanted to understand what kinds of diachronic and synchronic factors stood behind the formation of various networks of human connection interpreted as regional structures.¹

Keywords: Kalotaszeg, marriage, network, exogamy, endogamy, micro-region, regional identity, prestige, hierarchy, ecological complex

We also wanted to understand the mechanisms of the development and content of shifting regional identities carried by various groups in local societies. We attempted to learn where individuals placed themselves on the ethno-cultural map of the larger area: did they possess a consciousness of belonging to specific ethnographic/ethno-cultural groups or regions? Did they possess at all self-descriptions reflecting independent identity consciousness? What kind of regional structure emerged from their mental spatial perspectives necessary for their self-categorization?

From a methodological point of view we found the study of system of marriage ties instrumental in approaching issues in connection with the formation of regional structure and the reproduction of regional identity.² In this article, we would like to outline the methodo-

¹ The book of the authors on the topic BALOGH – FÜLEMILE 2004.

² The period of time we have studied, within reach of memory looking back 3–4 generations, extends from approximately the 1870s until the recent disintegration of traditional marriage systems, which began in the

logical importance of studying marriage networks in their spatial dimension by presenting the example of our specific case-study of the Kalotaszeg region.

In the course of our research, we generated several maps that were useful means of studying networks with spatial aspects. The final outcome of our research was also a map of the spatial structure and the boundaries and sub-regions of the Kalotaszeg region based on the network of marriage ties. The map includes diachronic factors as well and expresses the frequency and dynamism of connections along with hierarchic evaluative value judgments, illustrating how people see and interpret various constitutive elements of the network. (Figure 3, 4)

Following a short introduction to the region, we will elucidate how we approached the problem of studying the marriage network from a theoretical point of view as well as the concrete methodology we used in our study. At the end, we give a brief analysis of the final outcome of our field research.

INTRODUCTION TO THE REGION

The so-called Kalotaszeg region extends 50 kilometres to the west between Kolozsvár/*Cluj* and the market-town of Bánffyhunyard/*Huedin* and stretches along the main road leading from the city of Nagyvárad/*Oradea* to Cluj. The almond shape territory is divided into larger or smaller subregions and microregions along the valleys of rivers and brooks.³ (Figure 3) The settlements vary in population from 100-1400 residents, not counting Bánffyhunyard, which functions as the administrative and economic hub of the region.

The settlements of Kalotaszeg are inhabited either partly or entirely by ethnic Hungarians, the overwhelming majority of whom are Calvinists. There are also Romanians and various groups of Roma population cohabiting with the Hungarians. Ethnic proportions vary from place to place. (Figure 1) The mountains surrounding the region⁴ serve as both a geographic and an ethnic boundary. It is a historical fact that in the period from the 18th to the end of 20th century the ratio of Romanian ethnic population in territories adjoining Kalotaszeg increased significantly, while the continuous shrinking of Hungarian ethnic space is an inexorable historical process. (Kocsis – Kocsis – Hóposi 1998:99-133)

In the 1940s, Kalotaszeg comprising a Hungarian population of approximately 40,000 constituted a strong ethnic “island” in the surrounding “sea” of majority Romanian population. Today, as a consequence of the radical decline in the Hungarian population, there are about 12 to 14,000 ethnic Hungarians living in the area. Still, Kalotaszeg continues to remain a relatively homogeneous but very fragile ethnic island of Hungarians. This comparative homogeneity is a significant factor in the formation of a succinct ethnic identity in the region.

early 1960s from the time of collectivisation and continues to mean changes in lifestyle corresponding to the transformation of local societies in the general processes of urbanisation and acculturation. These processes have rapidly accelerated since the political transition of 1989. Our present efforts have focused on reconstructing the traditional system of marriage ties of the first part of the 20th century.

³ Sebes Körös/*Crișul Repede*, Kalota/*Câlata*, Almás/*Almaș*, Nádas/*Nadaș*, Kapus/*Căpușul*, Kis-Szamos/*Someșul Mic*, Lóna/*Luna*, Fenes/*Finis*, etc.

⁴ To the northwest Meszes/*Mezeș*, southwest Vlegyásza/*Vlădeasa* and south Gyalu/*Gilău* Mountains.

The region of Kalotaszeg represents one of the earliest and most famous discoveries of complex Hungarian peasant culture, rich in subtle nuances ranging from music and dance to embroidery, traditional costumes, woodcarving and furniture painting. Its unique style was discovered by the elite society of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the end of the 19th century, beginning with the royal court, then spreading among members of the aristocracy, intelligentsia and in artistic circles. It went on to become a fashionable place of cultural pilgrimage and was a significant source of inspiration for the Hungarian Art Nouveau movement at the turn of the 20th century. Virtually a model for the fame-creating process of a region, the name Kalotaszeg is a phenomenon unto itself, both in Hungarian ethnography and in the history of national culture. (Figure 5 and 6)

Market-oriented art-production has been a source of income since the late 19th century up to the present day, primarily for communities located along the main road. To this day, local crafts - often rooted in historical traditions (e.g. textile work, bead-work, wood carving and furniture-painting) - and the trade of home-industry products provides work opportunities for many. Although value systems, modes of expressing prestige, criteria for partner selection, gender roles, the observance of traditional holiday customs and the need to create and use certain forms of aesthetic expression, have undergone changes, the region is still characterized by budding manifestations of folklorism based on rich antecedents and strengthened by the stimulating power of ethnic identity. Local "village tourism", growing in strength after 1990, offers to some a livelihood through paying guests interested in folk dancing, folk costumes, folk architecture etc. (BALOGH 2004: 175-182) In light of the above, the maintenance and display of this renowned culture of Kalotaszeg could now become an economic issue and a question of survival. (BALOGH – FÜLEMILE 2006) (Figure 2)

PROBLEMS IN METHODS FOR THE DELINEATION OF THE REGION – EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CONNECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES

The area studied and methods of field-work

We have made efforts not to allow preconceptions to influence our definition of the region and avoided limiting our field-work only to those villages that have already been the object of studies in connection with Kalotaszeg. For this reason, both in geographic and ethnic terms, we have stepped beyond the boundaries set by previous research, checking the authenticity of prior results in order to ascertain whether the communities that fit the already stereotypical image of Kalotaszeg do indeed belong to the regional structure on one level or another.⁵

We attempted to employ a unified system of viewpoints when exploring the network of connections within the grass-roots social structure comprised by the villages in the region under scrutiny. Since the web of connections between individual settlements included regional bonds of varying extent and structure, it became necessary to identify different levels within this network so as to gain a deeper image of the region in terms of the well-defined

⁵ We have started doing frequent fieldwork since 1991 and studied approximately 100 settlements up until now in Kalotaszeg and in the larger vicinity. As a result we have published several articles.

and less obvious borders of its network. In addition, we also placed a strong emphasis on drawing a more refined and in-depth map of the internal divisions within Kalotaszeg in order to look beyond the micro-regions that have commonly been associated with the broader regional divisions in the area until now. In examining threads of human contact within this spatial system, we saw that areas with higher and lower densities of regional connection form an interwoven fabric that constantly shifts within a single time and space. Moreover, an analysis of how connections are influenced by historical processes was also required.

Research conducted up to the present has not examined in detail where the inhabitants of individual villages place themselves on a broader continuum beyond their local identity. If we are to map the external and internal boundaries of a given territorial unit, the opinions of local residents can not be ignored with regard to how they consciously perceive the reciprocal human connections that result from direct social communication. The issue to consider is which local societies or specific social strata, ethnic and religious groups within them consider themselves to be members of a given regional unit and which do not. In other words, who is it that places their own community inside or outside of a named network of contacts that changes in time and space, how do they regard its internal divisions, and why? To what extent are locals familiar with their community? Are they only familiar with their immediate environment or do they also have knowledge about the wider community, and if so, through what channels of communication and with what motivations?

It is important to see the internal viewpoints that motivate individual settlements not only to place themselves in a network of contacts, but also to qualify others as insiders or outsiders. Which communities are regarded by everyone as members of the regional group and which ones are people uncertain about?

Another question is not only to what extent a conscious affinity exists and in what structures, but also how designated names are used. Is a self-designation applied consciously or is it an outside term that is accepted in varying degrees and perhaps used with a kind of uncertain neutrality?

This gives rise to the issue of whether the communities deemed by ethnographic science to be part of Kalotaszeg actually possess at all and to what extent a genuine and tangible Kalotaszeg identity. Is this consciousness important to them and does it reflect emotional content? Is there a collective Kalotaszeg identity within the entire community or does this identity differ according to the given social strata or age-group? Furthermore, is the Kalotaszeg identity merely advocated in the community by certain individuals (agents) perhaps in keeping with specific interests? Who perceives the “Kalotaszeg essence” and how is it manifested (e.g. in mental, conscious and cultural traits)? Are there certain aspects that provide a foundation for a hierarchy among individual villages, and if so, what are they? Does the ranking of a settlement within this hierarchy depend on how and to what extent the given community embodies the Kalotaszeg ideal?

An important aspect to take into consideration when mapping the system of connections within a region is how individual groups of villages regard others in their micro-environment as being communities of greater or lesser prestige. What are the networks of connection that have developed between prestigious villages and those with a lower level of recognition within a broader or narrower circle of settlements? It is worth noting which settlements individual communities compare themselves to and who they compete

with. Connections between individual communities may be horizontal or vertical. Usually, however, communities with the same social ranking but independent of one another on an economic and administrative level also rank each other on the basis of real or perceived characteristics. Our research in the studied micro-environment aimed to identify settlements that local inhabitants regarded as having a “strong” or “doubtful” reputation and to find out how these communities came to be attributed with their local image. An additional issue is that in the case of Kalotaszeg, the development of “reputation” and image is also influenced by the process of interethnic bonding.

The region as an “ecological complex” or as a “collective”?

As an interethnic territory, Kalotaszeg and its broader mountainous environment are a prime example of Fredrik Barth’s “complementary” model of ethnicity (BARTH 1969) which holds that prevalent ethnic occupational specialization in regions where vast ecological and geographic differences intersect leads to economic interdependence and symbiosis. When examining the “niche” in question – a mixture of connections between the ecological environments, modes of sustainability, settlement systems and forms of economic interaction – we were interested in the types of contact and cooperation that developed among groups of humans within the framework of the given interactive space.

In Kalotaszeg, the inhabitants of villages everywhere in the lower valleys and basins (Hungarians) refer to their neighbors in the surrounding mountains as “them” i.e. “the people of the snowy (Havas) mountains” – the Havas Mountains being a completely different geo-economic territory inhabited exclusively by Romanian ethnic groups. During market season, it said that the “snowies are coming down”. In reality, the term is used to designate peoples who inhabit the distant, higher areas of the Vlădeasa and Gilău Mountain ranges.

A distinction must be made, however, regarding the lower territories of the region where purely Romanian settlements as well as villages with mixed populations have been established over time in the vicinity of Hungarian communities. Here, two or more ethnic groups have only partially established occupational specialization. The majority belong to the same social and occupational groups and are obliged to “compete” within the same geographic environment. In this case, the aforementioned complementary model is only partly valid or not at all. Therefore, it is worthwhile to present a more complex comparison of value systems, economic mentality and strategic elements, which is far less obvious but ultimately forms latent, implicit complementarities in deeper structures and still serves “competition”.

If the region is to be examined as a scene of interaction and as an entire network of contacts that reflects communication between individuals, then we must take into consideration the social structure of the region as a whole. In such a wider interpretation, interethnic contact naturally acts as an integral part of the regional structure. Mapping interactions between everyday individuals - forms of economic contact⁶, but also participation in education as well as dealing with legal and administrative issues or even military service - de-

⁶ E. g. fair-ground connections, markets, peddling, local shops, pubs, cartage, craftsman, commissioned labor, day labor, part-time work, domestic servantry, neighborly assistance, patron-client relations, hired shepherds, hired musicians etc. In the course of our work as a useful means of analysis we had generated several maps of historic and more recent phenomena (not published here).

lineates a network of human interaction that goes beyond social, denominational and ethnic borders. In this way, the complex web of “everyday” economic-social-ethnic interaction can serve as a relevant solution when outlining regional structure.

Even so, it was obvious to us that presenting this kind of complexity would be a monumental task even in the case of a single locality, let alone an entire region that is home to nearly hundred settlements. At the same time, we believed that if we wanted to present the strong “integrity and cohesion” of individual systems (of micro-regions) within a network of contacts, then the final classification would have to include numerous conscious elements.

We considered it worthwhile to ponder on some of the concepts defined in Talcott Parsons’ classic sociological work entitled *The Social System*. When examining a complex system of integrated contacts driven by economics and the market, we see a significantly wider and more diffusive geo-economic network encompassing a much larger population. Based on different aspects, such a network can be outlined as a set of overlapping circles existing side by side; hence Parsons’ “ecological complex” does not meet the criteria of “collectivity”. “It is only when as action system involves solidarity in this sense that its members define certain actions required in the interest of the integrity of the system itself, and others as incompatible with the integrity – with the result that sanctions are organized about this definition. Such system will be called a “collectivity”. Collectivity-orientation, as it were, involves posing the “question of confidence”; are you one of us or not?...solidarity in this sense involves going a step beyond “loyalty”... Collectivity-orientation on the other hand converts this “propensity” into an institutionalized obligation of the role-expectation. Than whether the actor “feels like it” or not, he is obligated to act in certain ways and risks the application of negative sanctions if he does not... Conformity with expectations of collectivity-orientation may be called taking “responsibility” as a member of the collectivity. But it is a further step of elaboration to conceive of the collectivity “acting as a unit”, or “in concert”... At the limiting pole of completely uninstitutionalized fluidity a system of social interaction would involve no collectivities in the technical sense of the present discussion; it would be only an ecological complex.”⁷ Collectivity, which in this sense comprises a wider circle than a local community, is an integrated unit, one which possesses the capability and the tools necessary for self-definition, self-categorization and the preservation of its own system.

It is these viewpoints that have assisted us in selecting one of the two approaches. The definition of an ethnographic region must include the aforementioned conscious elements, and so instead of studying the broader and looser network of the ecological complex, we regard the most consistent method of research to be one that focuses on coherent regional districts possessing their own self-identity and organized through marriage ties and mutual feelings of community.

Viewed as a “collective”, micro-regions do not always differ from one another in terms of cultural traits (although this is also possible). The emphasis here is not on culture, but on self-preservation and the ability to reproduce. In other words, a regional unit can only

⁷ Chapter III, The Structure of the Social system, I: The Organization of the Components into Sub-systems. The Solidarity of the Collectivity. In: PARSONS 1964: 96–101.

be called an ethnographic group insofar as both a demand and an opportunity exist for preserving its traditional circles of marriage. We have observed numerous cases in which the disintegration of marital bonds has been accompanied by a loss of group identity and culture.

External boundaries

Our point of departure was that marriage ties play an important integrating role and can therefore be regarded as a decisive factor when interpreting the micro-region as a “collective”. This aspect clearly outlined the human circles which place themselves inside and outside of a regional group. Using this method, we attempted to identify groups within the geographical and historical parameters of the Kalotaszeg population who not only considered themselves to be part of the regional group, but whose self-categorization was consensually accepted by both members of their own group and those on the outside.

In order to further illustrate our train of thought, we must answer the following question: In the case of pre-modern rural societies, what principles provided the foundation for traditional marriage systems in the territory of historical Hungary in the Carpathian Basin? It can be said that marriage preferences were largely determined by two dominant factors: social and religious affiliation.

People moving within the framework of the same physical space in pluralistic local communities formed groups that were separated by interactive and symbolic boundaries.

When modeling the structure of a local society with limited mobility, it is necessary to show the relationship between vertical and horizontal elements. If we were to rank social groups in a column from top to bottom on an imaginary social ladder, separate categories (systems of contact) would typically include local landowners (if the given settlement included an estate), lesser nobility, the intelligentsia church and secular, local middle-class society (craftsmen, merchants and administrative functionaries), local peasantry and wandering groups with no local roots, including peasants employed as servants (if the community had them).

This deeply ingrained and rigid hierarchy was vertically intersected by religious boundaries in the event that several denominations co-existed within the local community. If the peasantry in the locality lived in religious division (e.g. Catholics vs. Protestants), the two groups generally did not mix with each other. People of different denominations tended to look outside of the community in search of partners from other villages, but of the same denomination (denominational homogamy).

The same is true of social stratification: members of the lesser nobility maintained familial and social bonds with the nobility of other communities, craftsmen and merchants sought contact with members of their own social stratum in other villages (social endogamy), and so on.

The development of common marriage circles (through local exogamy) also provided an opportunity to form common cultural circles, hence the self-representation of various groups in local society through marriage outside of the community can be characterized in different styles that more or less sharply manifested group boundaries.

In the case of pre-modern rural societies in East-Central Europe, ethnic boundaries were drawn (prior to the formation of modern national identity) as a secondary projection

of religious boundaries. The socio-historical development typical of the Carpathian Basin is one of “ethnic religions” i.e. denominations monopolized by individual ethnic groups. Although this process led to a tight interdependence between religion and ethnicity, it should not erase the order of priorities according to which the formation of religious groups is the primary and dominant factor while the development of ethnic boundaries is only as sharp as religious separation has already prepared it to be.

The processes behind the formation of ethnic boundaries in the Carpathian Basin can be more or less illustrated on the basis of two models.⁸ In places where religious and ethnic boundaries corresponded to one another, there is a sharp division between systems of relational contact among religious-ethnic groups, the dividing lines are inflexible and can hardly be crossed. Where only linguistic-ethnic differences were present and no religious division existed, the boundaries are far less rigid and can be penetrated more easily depending on the situation (along with ethnic identity), and such “permeability” was greatly fostered by the processes of assimilation that came with modernization, especially in urban environments.

The studied rural territory of Kalotaszeg is mostly characterized by the first, religious-ethnic type of division. Until recently, intermingling and intermarriage have very rarely taken place, if at all. In settlements stratified along religious/ethnic and/or social lines, various groups have formed relational contacts outside of their common local space, choosing local exogamy as the strategy for finding partners. Therefore, if we wish to map the outer borders of Kalotaszeg on the basis of marriage ties, the following steps seem relatively easy and logical.

The network of marriage circles provided the social, religious and related ethnic foundation for outlining the regional structure, revealing those groups who have formed circles of genetic reproduction by consensus and created within them a special cultural focus with visually tangible features and repeated patterns of action, the awareness and practice of which have given people living in the given group a sense of community.

In accordance with this definition, it can thus be said that Kalotaszeg is primarily a network of human contacts shifting in a time and space characterized by a system of culture and communication populated first and foremost by Calvinist peasants of Hungarian ethnic origin. This network did not include⁹ the non-peasant and non-Calvinist groups in the region, a double factor that excluded villages of nobility, the industrialist and merchant strata of urban environments that experienced an early middle-class development (including the local Israelite Jewish community), Catholic Hungarians, Catholic Saxons, the Orthodox or Greek Catholic Romanian peasantry, and the mobile or locally settled Roma community, (who were primarily employed as musicians, craftsmen and shepherds). Based on these criteria, it is not only certain local groups of inhabitants who are excluded from the regional structure on a social, religious/ethnic basis, but also entire settlements geographically wedged in the territory of Kalotaszeg.¹⁰

⁸ See Lockwood 1981 analysis on comparing Bosnia to Burgenland.

⁹ The term excluded in this case means that the groups listed here did not consider themselves to be part of Kalotaszeg. In addition, they were able to name the groups who they considered to be Kalotaszegians, and Kalotaszegians also regarded them to be outsiders. The space available here is too limited to quote the many striking narratives that illustrate this phenomenon.

¹⁰ It should be mentioned here that Romanian villages in the region that coexist with Hungarians distance themselves from the regional identity of Kalotaszeg – a term which they are either unfamiliar with or associ-

Internal boundaries

The study of marriage systems, however, indicates more than these larger structures and external borders. Even if we concentrate purely on marriage within the Calvinist Hungarian peasant population, it can still help to outline sub- and micro regions within the larger area.

Along with the local endogamy that village communities in Kalotaszeg make an effort to maintain, there is also a general tendency of exogamy that can be identified within a well-defined circle. When asked which villages they sought spouses from, people in practically all Hungarian (and Romanian) villages quickly replied that they looked for partners in their own village. When pressed for a more specific answer, however, individuals everywhere eventually named a handful of communities with which marital relations and ties of affinity had been maintained on a regular basis going back to the distant past. (The majority of our informants revealed that one of their grandmothers, aunts or sister-in-laws had come from a different settlement.¹¹)

The emphasis on the exclusivity of local endogamy as a kind of verdict is sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker¹², even though the ratio of exogamic marriages - one or two exceptions notwithstanding - is similar throughout the villages of Kalotaszeg.¹³ The strength of this topos is not necessarily connected with the size of the population in a given village. Simple logic dictates that the smaller a community is, the more favorable marriage outside the community would seem, and in the case of villages with a population

ate with a territory belonging exclusively to Hungarian villages. The Romanian terms “zona Călata,” “plasa Călata” carry geographical/administrative sense and do not have strong identity constituent. (We have also begun to map Romanian circles of marriage within the same territory, but at the moment have refrained from publishing the results due to insufficient data.)

¹¹ In keeping with the patrilocality of Hungarian peasant society, it was mainly women who married into other communities outside of their own village into the groom's family, but here, as with other Calvinist settlements in the Carpathian Basin - where the frequency of “marrying into the bride's family” increased due to the single-child system resulting from family planning in parallel with opportunities for women to inherit land after the beginning of the 19th century - we also encounter cases of men moving to their brides. Although this did not mean a loss of prestige for the men involved (marrying into wealth was in fact regarded as proof of talent and shrewdness), even during the 20th century the numerical ratio of women who moved to their husbands' villages was still higher than cases of the opposite.

¹² The patriarchal nature of peasant society is sufficiently illustrated by the frequently used derogatory question: “Why is goose-shit better than hen-shit?” - meaning why look for a wife in the neighbouring village when you can find one here at home? Other derisive comments, however, refer to the opportunity for marital ties outside of the village, presenting an image of the broader environment that precisely indicates the conscious direction of exogamic relationships: “There's no greater curse than a wife from Bika.” or “Don't buy a wife from Vista, milk from Méra, or a cow from Szucság!” A Romanian version used in Nyárszó: “Don't buy pigs from Nyíres 'cause they're just no good, and don't take women from Föld 'cause they're all just sluts!”

¹³ This ratio as well as possible fluctuations in the endogamy-exogamy ratio in earlier historical periods can and should be clarified via the study of birth certificates. Nevertheless, the task of processing birth certificates tracing back almost 200 years for the nearly 70 settlements involved is not something that can be accomplished “manually” by two researchers. Partial data is already available for 8 villages in the micro-region of Nádas and 1 in the micro-region of Alszeg, and source documentation is ongoing. These results support the outline gained via the ethnographic methods we have applied, and despite the deficiencies in our birth certificate database, we believe that these recent methods will enable us to correctly ascertain the main characteristics of the phenomenon under study.

of 150–200 individuals it is indeed a genetic imperative. Even so, there are densely populated settlements where marriage within the village was not an issue of prestige and where exogamy was openly accepted whereas other villages that were obviously not capable of healthy reproduction due to their size made efforts to maintain endogamy, which was mentioned as a significant question of prestige, and the practice of which was also apparent in marital relations among cousins.

We inquired about the direction of marriage relationships in every village and were given affirmative feedback from villages belonging to one circle or another. The network of ties has been summarized in a chart (not published here), which also shows two other elements partially related to marriage ties. Sources in all locations were asked which villages they considered to be “similar” and “on friendly terms” with their own and in what ways they perceived this similarity. The second question aimed to identify settlements which exchanged visitors with one another for celebrations and dances, meaning which villages offered local youth a regular opportunity to become acquainted.¹⁴

Even within circles comprising 3–4 villages, and in some cases more, the frequency of contact between settlements is not balanced, sometimes intense and sometimes sporadic. (The thickness of the lines connecting the villages on our maps indicates the frequency with which they make contact with one another. See Figure 4.)

It was also revealed that the image of certain villages within the circle of marital ties also differed. A positive image was not necessarily related to a higher number of marriages; the ranking or preferential status of an individual village was not based on quantifiers. In other words, the prestige of a given settlement within the circle of marriage ties was not gained according to the achieved quantity of marriages, but in accordance with the level of appreciation that it was given.

Going beyond marital ties, when sources were asked which villages they considered most similar to their own, they did not always mention villages with which they had the most frequent contact. It is also worth observing whether both parties involved have a positive image of the other, whether they rank marriage ties on the same level and whether they actually admit or perceive similarity with one another. In this way, an even finer grid can also be outlined within the micro-region of the given marriage circle.

In most cases, the concept of “similarity” was generally understood in terms of cultural traits, mainly including external appearance, clothing styles and taste.¹⁵ On the other hand, the mention of villages with similar styles of native costume may also indicate hidden prestige aspirations, a desire to be connected with the name of a “stronger”, more popular and stylish settlement. This aspect is especially evident in the case of Felszeg, where the “old-

¹⁴ Among the several maps we generated we have also outlined a map indicating centres for local musical groups as well as their range of activity (not included here).

¹⁵ Culturally isolated from their “Kalotaszegian” neighbours, communities that experienced an early rise of the middle-class (Gyalu, Egeres, Szászfenés) do not compare themselves to others and in fact emphasise that they stand alone (which also illustrates that “similarity” is mainly perceived in external features.) It is a different issue that the early development of middle-class society can be observed in communities which for one reason or another had already created a unique kind of social and economic model in the past. Isolation from the Kalotaszeg environment is therefore evident on multiple levels, both in a cultural sense and with respect to the contacts determined by historical socio-economic antecedents.

time" Felszeg fashion ideal retained in the plainer and more simplistic ornamentation of local costumes is most often associated with Kalotaszek, which already enjoys great prestige due to various other factors. More villages wish to be similar to Kalotaszek than the number of settlements that actually maintain contact with it. Despite the above, "simplicity" is often seen to be manifested in personal traits, virtues and congeniality as well. Intensive contact between villages also entails mutual respect, which not only focuses on external similarities, but also emphasizes spiritual closeness. In certain cases, there is a striking and mutually supported level of congeniality and solidarity between two neighboring villages. This phenomenon does not repeat automatically, and the reasons behind it can not be explained with schematic simplicity either. We observed this kind of solidarity in only a few cases (e.g.: "It's almost like we're brothers" "Our people and our dress are the same.")

Contacts between individual communities, villages and groups of settlements can be based either on an equal ranking or a vertical, superior-inferior hierarchy. There is no space here to even sketch up what factors can contribute to threads of contact between communities developed according to a central formula.

The map of marriage circles also attempts to demonstrate the prestige of villages and how they are perceived by others. Based on the consensus within each sub-region, we have indicated the most prestigious villages in the given group of settlements. There is also universal consensus as to which villages are regarded with contempt and disparaged everywhere, and with whom marriage ties were considered degrading. The rankings indicate that within the micro-regions outlined according to marriage ties, each sub-region consistently displays positive and negative peaks on its own ranking scale. (Figure 4)

THE STRUCTURE OF MICRO-REGIONS OF KALOTASZEG DELINEATED ON THE BASIS OF THE SYSTEM OF MARRIAGE TIES

Based on the density of marriage circles within the territory under study, the region can be divided into four main sub-regions (South-West, North-West, North-East, South-East). (See the brief description below the points A/1-4.) Within the territory of the main sub-regions there are three enclosure-like, endogamous local communities exist separately from or loosely attached to these sub-regions (B/1-3), as well as a few compact marriage circles comprising several communities that integrate outside the network of contacts within Kalotaszek, and which exhibit no communal ties with the larger region (C/1-2). The perimeter of this territory still recalls the contacts maintained with villages once populated by Hungarians within the larger historical region, which today have become purely Romanian in their ethnic make-up (D). (These former networks have been also designated in Figure 3 and 4.) Wherever we encountered examples that could serve as valuable models, we have included smaller case-studies to illustrate their strength.

A closer examination of the four main sub-regions (South-West, North-West, North-East and South-East) revealed on the basis of marriage circles should emphasize the following elements: Two of the four are in the west and two in the east and surprisingly, the border running from north to south between them directly correlates with the line between

two medieval counties, which remained in this form until the 15th century – (Bihar and Kolozs) and that of the corresponding units of church administration (the archdeaconries of Kalota and Kolozs). This indicates that the assemblage of human contacts during the 19th and 20th century essentially continued to reflect the spatial borders of institutional networks that were established from the 11th–13th centuries, and which functioned according to this structure until the late Middle-Ages.

Denser networks of contact enduring compact structures can be observed within these western micro-regions where - as will be shown - usage of the names “Kalota” and “Kalotaszeg” can be confirmed using the earliest historical sources available.

Sporadic data contained in already published source documentation also implies the surprising antiquity of the marriage circles outlined above, their origins tracing back to the Middle-Ages. The data are random and do not reveal a complete structure, but they do indicate certain trends and essentially confirm the trends that we have discovered.

A.

A/1 *“Felszeg”, the South-West sub-region*

An area located partly in the valley of Kalota at a height of 500–600 meters near the Vladeasa Mountains and characterized by poorer soil conditions rather apt for animal husbandry, has been separately designated by the name Felszeg since the Middle-Ages.¹⁶ The term “Kalota” appears in several documents from the 13th century. Upon examining the history of the region, however, one begins to sense the threads of contact that connected seemingly scattered villages.

The early history is inseparable from that of the noble Gyerő family and very early data on the history of this estate already connected it with the term “Kalota”.¹⁷ The G(y)erő or Gyerőfi – a family of several branches (Kabos, Radó and Kemény) were the oldest noble lineages in the region, and the two most important centers of life on their estate of about 15 villages (CSÁNKI 1913: 270, 358.) also inherited their names: Gyerővásárhely and Gyerőmonostor, the former being a significant and lucrative marketplace and the latter providing a spiritual centre with its Benedictine monastery, which is also one of the most outstanding architectural monuments in Kalotaszeg. Stories also tell of a legendary medieval Catholic pilgrimage site at Jézus-bérce, on a mountain slope somewhere between Gyerőmonostor and Magyarvalkó. (TÉGLÁSI 1891: 90.) It was not only close proximity and common property ownership, but also mutual history of church administration that connected some villages more closely, which were affiliates of the mother-churches before or after the Reformation (middle of 16th century).

Beside the above private noble estate, there were other systems of ownership and administration. Villages in Felszeg and Alszeg (the sub-region to the North-West) belonged under the jurisdiction of two large royal castle estates, Sebesvár and Almás, which constituted an independent administrative unit and passed into the hands of private land-owners in the 14th century. Each micro-region had its own spiritual and market centre early on.

¹⁶ The micro-region includes 12 Hungarian and Hungarian–Romanian villages. In light of historical as well as cultural aspects, one must also take into account 16 one-time Hungarian inhabited villages in the vicinity – now populated exclusively by Romanians.

¹⁷ See e.g. in the following document from 1296: “Tributum quod in villa Vasarhel vocata (a johanne filio Mykola de Kalatha) ab antiquo exigui consuevit” (CSÁNKI 1913: 358.)

Several records prepared during the 15th century in connection with the Bánffy castle estate in Sebesvár contain separate references to villages belonging to “Kalathazeg”. The territory that lies to the south of Bánffyhunyard¹⁸ is still referred to by local Hungarians as Felszeg and is given a higher ranking. Medieval sources used the term Kalotaszeg exclusively in reference to this area, and it was only during the 17th century that other sources began to mention both Felszeg and Alszeg together as Kalotaszeg. (JAKÓ 1944:217) Their names meaning “Upper End” and “Lower End” in itself show that the two micro-regions once comprised a coherent unit.

Moreover regarding marriage ties, the densest network of connections developed in Felszeg. Although there are a few geographically isolated settlements that stand on the periphery, it is striking that the majority of villages in Felszeg maintained and continue to maintain regular contact with one another.¹⁹ In this way, the opportunity for achieving a genetic balance was relatively secure, and locals possess a surprising amount of knowledge about their neighboring villagers due to this far-reaching network of kin-connections. It is here that a compact sense of space is most obvious, where the name denotes a perception of “regional unity”, and since there is no uncertainty concerning where its borders are, the area displays the strongest common regional identity as well.

We experienced this proud Kalotaszeg consciousness in numerous situations throughout the villages of Felszeg, where local Hungarians regard themselves as a true manifestation of “old and genuine” Kalotaszeg culture. They take great pride in the value of its “older”, simpler and more temperate nature, including members of the younger generation. The prestige of Felszeg is also acknowledged in Alszeg, where locals mentioned Kalotaszekirály (a central village of Felszeg)²⁰ as “the real Kalotaszeg”, but this sense of prominence of Felszeg can also be found in the more distant Eastern areas as well.

A/2 “Alszeg” the sub-region in the North-West

“Alszeg”, north of Bánffyhunyard has a segmented topography in the valley along the Almás riverbed, and in several smaller valleys and basins. Alszeg offers an altogether more favorable soil quality and climate for farming than the Felszeg, and had significant grain, fruit and grape production.²¹

The Hungarian populace of Alszeg is the ethnically most fragile group in Kalotaszeg. Among the 9 villages traditionally listed, the number of Hungarian residents decreased dramatically from 1910–1992, and today the Hungarian population in the area totals approximately 2,500 individuals. In four out of the nine villages²² Romanian inhabitants

¹⁸ Bánffyhunyard which is the economic hub of the area was the market centre of the Bánffy estate and received its town privilege in the 15th century.

¹⁹ Among the eleven-twelve villages that comprise Felszeg, five in the core maintain a frequent and regular circle of marriage ties. The same villages also have expanded though less frequent connections with four other communities. Among all of the villages in this network, intensive contact was apparent between a few neighboring pairs.

²⁰ Among the surrounding settlements, it is primarily Kalotaszekirály that is favorably compared to Bánffyhunyard, due to its unquestionably secure and outstanding prestige, relatively large population and the strong cohesion of its community.

²¹ 9 partly or entirely Hungarian plus 7 non-Hungarian communities are located in the area.

²² Váralmás, Nagypetri, Farnas, Bábonny.

already constituted a majority in 1910. This ethnic ratio of a century ago was essentially a projection of the current prestige hierarchy. Today, the “strongest” villages are Ketesd, Zsobok and Magyarbikal, which still remain purely Hungarian. Ethnic presence, opportunities to avoid extinction and the corresponding capacity to meet current economic challenges – the ability to survive – has now become a decisive factor in the prestige of these villages.²³

A/3–4 The micro-regions in the East

The Western and Eastern sub-, and micro-regions nearer to Cluj are separated from by the mountain pass running from northeast to southwest – the watershed of the Körös and Szamos river basins which also serve as a Romanian ethnic corridor. Although the territory expanding to the East has a rich past, it was historically not connected to Kalotaszeg. Contrary to popular opinion, it should be emphasized here that Nádas Valley and other territories near Kolozsvár were not settled later than Felszeg and Alszeg, but were in all likelihood populated earlier or at the same time as the Western regions discussed above.²⁴ During the Middle-Ages, the territory closer to Kolozsvár belonged under the authority of the royal castle at Kolozs. As the royal estate disintegrated over the course of the 13th century, two large domains developed in the area and a large majority of the local population was part of these serfdoms. The social composition of the region was enhanced by a few smaller country manors and villages of noble status.²⁵ Here in the eastern part, it is also two micro-regions that reveal themselves: the marriage circle of 11–12 villages along the Nádas, Kapus, Kis-Szamos rivers can be found in the North-East, and 3–4 Hungarian villages in the Fenes Valley comprise a smaller and more compact micro-region in the South-East.

Communities indicated in bold and underlined on Chart I (see next page) represent the villages in each micro-region that had the highest number of marriage ties (at least 8) with other villages. The next in line (at least 5–7) have been indicated only in bold. (Regarding their network of contacts, it is not by accident that Gyerővásárhely and Kapus are listed in the north-eastern group.)

²³ About the tendency of ethnic extinction and the survival strategies of Hungarian Diaspora communities see BALOGH – FÜLEMILE 2006. Located in the direction of the Meszes Mountains is the smallest village of Bábonny, the most remote and ethnically/ demographically isolated settlement in Alszeg (35 inhabitants including 17 Hungarian), now showing the final signs of decay. However, during the 20th century it also used to be one of the most open and mobile communities in the region – wives from Bábonny can be found everywhere in Alszeg.

²⁴ Unfortunately, the impressive romantic sketches of local history that appear in the beautifully written, sensitive and insightful literary work by Károly Kós entitled *Kalotaszeg* contain no verifiable data, and the inaccuracies that accompany the information that can actually be confirmed have been transformed into legends that are inseparable from the values of the “literate” in Kalotaszeg. The same is true of the following quote, which continues to endure even though it can not be verified and goes against the logic of Hungarian history: “*The western territory of Kalotaszeg, a more rugged area in the foothills of the Havas, is an older cultural region than the tamer northern and eastern parts, which have a more moderate climate and better soil. In fact, the first pioneers among the Hungarian peoples who occupied Transylvania settled in the bleaker territory under the mountains earlier...*” (Kós, 1937: 8)

²⁵ Such villages of lesser nobility included Szucsák, Méra, Koród, Szomordok and Buda (Bodonkút) near the Borsa Valley as well as Macskások, the nobles of which maintained marriage ties with the nobility of Szucság.

Chart 1: The degree of exogamy in villages from the first half to the middle of the 20th century

Southwest	Northwest	Northeast	Southeast
Bhunyard	Mbikal	Gyerővsh.	<u>Mlóna</u>
<u>Kdamos</u>	Ketesz	Nagykapus	Mfenes
Jtelke	Farnas	Kiskapus	Tordasztl.
Nyárszó	<u>Zsobok</u>	Bogártelke	Mléta
<u>Kszkirály</u>	<u>Sztána</u>	Ndaróc	
Zentelke	Kispetri	Inaktelke	
Mkereke	Nagypetri	<u>Mákó</u>	
Mvalkó	<u>Váralmás</u>	Türe	
Mgymonostor	Bábony	Mvista	
Sárvásár		Méra	
Körösfő		Kajántó	

The chart attempts to illustrate our conclusion that a majority of the villages in the western part of the territory maintained a higher and more consistent level of contact with each other, which points to a denser and more compact structure. At the same time, the eastern part shows a looser, more diffuse structure in which only a few villages play a more frequent and open mediating role. (See also Figure 3 and 4)

There are some key locations at each sub-region (such as Gyerővásárhely, Mákó or Lóna) with a very dense network of connection, which served as crossing point and typically played a connecting and mediating role between micro-regions.²⁶

There are some villages on the periphery of the area that once played a central role (e. g. Türe or Magyargyerőmonostor) which slowly lost its contacts and gradually shifted to the periphery as the surrounding Hungarian population with which marriage ties were formed in the past died out.

In terms of its marital bonds, there are some low-prestige more isolated communities. Factors contributing to this restricted network of ties include the negative reputation originating partly from economic circumstances. Isolation is often apparent in only their marriage network; in terms of labor migration, these can be the most active communities. The mentality of their residents and their economic strategy are plausible examples of desperate attempts among poor peasants to search for a way out of their poverty-stricken existence.

Regional structure as delineated by linguistic phenomena

Illustrative linguistic maps often allow for conclusions regarding socio-historical and local historical connections as well. It was Attila T. Szabó who played a decisive role in observing and consistently recording historical and living regional dialects in Kalotaszeg.²⁷ The results of this data also reveal a refined network within the region itself. Comparing

²⁶ There is no space here to enlist all those geographic, economic and social factors which shaped the special role of these communities.

²⁷ During the second half of the 1930s, he began conducting expansive field-work in Kalotaszeg as well as beyond its borders in the Borsa Valley and towards the Mezőség region, collecting data in 60 locations. More than 3,500 items of data were recorded in each location. SZABÓ – GÁLLFY – MÁRTON 1944.

the spatial structure delineated by marriage ties with the delicate internal structure derived from linguistic phenomena, similarities become very clear and ultimately involve two aspects of the same phenomenon. Obviously, groups that have participated in a circle of marriage ties for long periods of history through more frequent communication with one another also adapt to one another linguistically and in terms of cultural representation.

In any case, it is remarkable that linguistic structures within the region consistently draw borders around certain micro-regions. In terms of language, the most striking and unique micro-region of Kalotaszeg is the Felszeg, which also contains its own smaller linguistic circles, moreover, all of this correlates with our own delineated structure. Connecting Bánffyhuntyad with Kolozsvár, it is not only the closest centre of material innovation, but also the point from which local vernacular spreads outward. More noticeable is the fact that in many cases the linguistic phenomena associated with the lesser nobility of Kalotaszentkirály diverge from those of its surrounding micro-region.²⁸

Another larger unit that can also be more or less outlined is Alszeg.²⁹ In the majority of cases, parts of the eastern region in the direction of Cluj diverge linguistically, and the segmentation within is more random, making it more difficult to arrive at conclusions. In view of similarities to regional structure based on marriage ties, the image here is also not as clear as that of Felszeg and Alszeg.³⁰

EXTERNAL BOUNDARIES – UNITS INTEGRATING OUTWARDS FROM THE “KALOTASZEGIAN” NETWORK OF MARRIAGE TIES

B Endogamous, secluded enclosures

B/1 Jegenye

Located in the geographic centre of Reformed Presbyterian Kalotaszeg, the Catholic population of Jegenye comprise a fully secluded endogamous community. Jegenye is an exceptionally isolated and unaccepted poor peasant village in the region.³¹ Inhabitants of

²⁸ This separation is especially noticeable if we take into consideration that in many aspects the dialect in Kalotaszentkirály also differs from that of its twin-village, Zentelke the locality of one-time serfpeasants, with which, as previously mentioned, it did not maintain strong marital bonds. The Kalotaszentkirály dialect is more similar to the one prevalent in Magyarókerke, which was also home to many families of lesser nobility. Even so, it should be pointed out here that in terms of its clothing style and domestic culture, Magyarókerke adopted a more featureless middle-class style at a faster pace than its traditionalistic counterpart. Taking only a superficial glance – and if we only take certain ethnographic-cultural expressions as a starting point – one would never assume a tighter connection between the two, and yet their marital bonds, linguistic features and a conscious sense of common identity that is still voiced today clearly suggest a deeply rooted bond.

²⁹ Linguistically speaking, the northern border of Alszeg can be drawn again at Középlak.

³⁰ It is clear, however, that Egeres is a starting point for the wider dispersion of colloquial forms in a way similar to Bánffyhuntyad. Near Kolozsvár, the dialect of Szucság is more colloquial, more literary – derived from its noble past.

³¹ Practically almost without exception, all of the males in the village were miners in Egeres and were farming an average of 3–4 hectares of land as a side-line in the first part of the 20th century.

Jegenye practiced “centuries of tight inbreeding”.³² Partners were sought almost exclusively within the small community³³ and marriages between second-cousins occurred on a regular basis, one of the sad consequences of which is acknowledged by the inhabitants themselves, namely that there are many “unhappy” children in the village who suffer from genetic illnesses. In addition to numerous other social factors, one of the most important is that the inhabitants of Jegenye were settled here from other areas of Transylvania relatively late in the 18th century³⁴ and did not intermarry with members of other religions in their environment. Also did not seek contact with other Catholic communities either. Jegenye counts as the odd-one-out in its cultural features as well. Its solitary style of dress during the period between the two world wars “didn’t stand close” to Kalotaszeg.

B/2 Egeres

Due to the development of industry and mining at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the population of Egeres expanded and the village became an ethnically mixed settlement, after which its remaining Calvinist Hungarian inhabitants formed a closed endogamous community similar to that of Jegenye – all of which occurred within recent ethnographic memory. Their self-exclusion may be due to social distance originating from the time when the village was a market-town, followed later by the flood of migrants to the local mining colony during the early period of industrialization. The borders drawn between Egeres and the mixed populace of the industrial colony in Egeres-Forgácskút as they co-existed alongside one another is reminiscent of the resistant behavior displayed by other peasant communities against urban industrial sites during the early stages of their involvement in the increasingly capitalistic mining industry. Residents in the neighboring Catholic community of Jegenye summarized the situation thus: “Egeres is full of flotsam and jetsam, not too many natives, just flunkies from the Havas, real wild Romanians.”³⁵

B/3 Gyalu

The Hungarian community in the ethnically mixed town of Gyalu is the only one in the area under study where the decisive majority is Calvinists with no origins in nobility, yet they do not identify themselves with Kalotaszeg. The Hungarian population here is

³² CSÍK – KÁLLAY 1942: 24. Birth certificates reflected the same kind of closed endogamy within the village in earlier periods before the 20th century as well. Differences between the people of Jegenye and those of Kalotaszeg can be confirmed by strong genetic data as well.

³³ 558 individuals in 1910, including 555 Hungarians, 529 Roman Catholics (6 Greek Catholics, 11 Calvinists, and 6 Israelites) KLINGHAMMER 2000: 119.

³⁴ CSÍK – KÁLLAY 1942: 10–11. After 1690, when Principality of Transylvania lost its independent status and during the period of 18th century Catholic revival, the Catholic Church regained its estates in Egeres–Jegenye, which had been previously confiscated by the principality, and brought Catholics from the area of Radnót along the Maros River to settle there.

³⁵ It was in Jegenye that we first heard about a series of serious anti-Hungarian atrocities in 1944 that took place in Egeres, where 16 Hungarians were executed by various means of torture, and these events are still very much alive in local memory. The perpetrators included local Romanians from both Egeres and Forgácskút. Disapproval in connection with this historical experience also contributes to social distance among locals, and not just in terms of traditional peasant repugnance towards “flotsam and jetsam” coming from outside of the community.

composed of this Calvinist majority and a Catholic minority. Gyalu was home to a significant number of craftsmen as well as peasants in the service of the large Bánffy castle and estate³⁶ and two other land-owners at the beginning of the 20th century. A high degree of social distance can be observed between the local community of artisans and the peasantry. Both strata form their own isolated endogamous circles within the town. Craftsmen in the village also owned land, but they did not “mix” with local peasants. Both craftsmen and peasants of Gyalu explicitly differentiate themselves from the neighboring Kalotaszeg villages referring primarily to notable differences in clothing style. As the settlement becomes more urbanized, the accelerated rate at which its Hungarian community shrinks and dissolves among the growing number of local Romanians has become an inevitable process.

C. Marriage circles of local exogamy based on religious or social homogamy among local groups of Hungarians wedged in the territory of Kalotaszeg, who possess no Kalotaszeg identity

C/1 Roman Catholic Hungarians

The minority of Hungarian Catholics living in four settlements within the Calvinist majority that populated the areas to the west and north of Kolozsvár formed their own closed circle of marriage ties, which does not include the aforementioned Catholic community of Jegenye.³⁷ Among the four communities mentioned, it was mainly Catholics from Bács and Szászfenes who maintained regular connections with one another, since the villages are in close proximity. The other two communities are further away in a distance of 20–30 km. They represented a more urbanized, middle-class culture, and do not regard themselves as part of Kalotaszeg. In their view, people of Kalotaszeg are the Calvinist peasants who wore traditional folk costume.

C/2 Endogamous marriage circles within the stratum of lesser nobility

In some villages, noble lineage continues to be a genuine factor in determining self-identity. The two most prominent examples are Szucság, located in the Nádas Valley near Cluj (Kolozsvár), and Középlak in the north-west edge of the area, in the Almás Valley. Members of the numerous lesser nobility in both villages exhibited a strong sense of noble origin, and this has determined their selection of marriage partners, socialization, strategies for mobility and cultural expression all the way up to the recent past (including interior decoration, style of dress and cuisine), clearly separating them from villages with a “Kalotaszeg identity”.

³⁶ Gyalu was the administrative centre for the estate owned by the Bishopric of Transylvania in the middle ages, and most of the historical population in the surrounding villages consisted of serfs who worked on this estate. The castle and its lands changed hands several times over the centuries, yet the domain continued to retain its significance and economic influence throughout. JAKÓ 1944

³⁷ It does, however, embrace the considerably large Hungarian Catholic majority of Kisbács and Szászfenes as well the Hungarian Catholic minority in Kajántó and Magyarfenes.

The marriage ties of Calvinist lesser nobility in Szucság extend to the nobility of other noble Calvinist communities further away.³⁸ This network arches over long distances to the east and northeast. Stronger links existed mainly with Bodonkút and Kide. Local opinion maintains that the “precedence” of Szucság in the hierarchy of villages was unquestionable.³⁹

C/3. Models of noble and middle class regional identities

It is worth differentiating here models of identity of the local nobility. Communities with a population of small noble origin in the territory of Kalotaszeg and its wider environment can basically be ranked in two categories: one represented by Szucság, and the other by Kalotaszeg in the Felszeg. Put in simpler terms, one could also say that the first group did not possess a Kalotaszeg identity while the second one does.

Usage of the designative name ‘Kalotaszeg’ in Felszeg (as we have seen) is deeply rooted in the early Middle-Ages and originates from the historical–regional–social identity that was consciously assumed and expressed by the noble strata as proof of their ancient origins and then adopted by the peasantry as well. In the case of Felszeg, the prestige, customs and mentality that comprised Kalotaszeg consciousness throughout the entire peasant community were strengthened, formed and elevated by the presence of nobility. In contrast, the same consciousness could not appear in the corresponding deep layers of historical–social consciousness among the nobility in Szucság because the historical region of Nádas-mente was not part of the territorial-administrative unit that comprised the Kalotaszeg region, which still continued to provide the framework for the military and political organisation of local nobility prior and during the 19th century.

These two types of noble identity can also help us to better understand 2 versions of middle-class development. A comparison of well-to-do middle-class craftsmen and peasants in Bánffyahunyad, who expressed a proud Kalotaszeg consciousness, and middle-class artisans in Gyalu, whose mentality did not include a sense of Kalotaszeg identity, can lead us to similar conclusions.

D. Kalotaszeg vanished in time

The decline of the Hungarian population within a territory that can be perceived as an island of Hungarian language is a historical process reaching far into the past and may also be interpreted as a continuous shift in the spatial network of the region. Which of the set-

³⁸ There was once a significant population of Calvinist small nobles in the Borsa valley in Bodonkút, Kide, Magyarfodorháza, Bádok and Macskások. By the time of the population census in 1910, however, only a few Hungarian families remained in many of these villages, and some had moved on to Bodonkút. As the Hungarian population decreased, these communities ceased to play a role in the earlier system of contacts. A decline in the Hungarian population of these villages was an inevitable process throughout the 20th century.

³⁹ It was primarily men from Szucság who brought home wives from other villages in the circle and women from Szucság became brides in other settlements. The elderly women of Szucság also confirm that “bachelors from Szucság were much sought after” and that “girls from the other noble villages clung to suitors from Szucság.” According to villagers in Szucság, still the most respected marriages among families of noble lineage were those that were consummated within the village. In fact, almost all elderly members of the local nobility are related to one another through cousinry.

lements lost their Hungarian population and fell out of the network of ties and then from collective memory?

The logic and dynamic of this process is very similar from case to case. It can be ascertained that in villages counting less than 100 inhabitants in 1910, the local Hungarian community ceased to exist within 50–70 years. Some people moved away, some assimilated, and some died. (Numerous prominent examples can be found along the perimeter of all four Kalotaszeg sub-regions.⁴⁰) The following analogy best serves to illustrate the historical process of the shrinking of ethnic territory: at first glance, a cavity filled with water on a sandy beach appears to hold the water, but then the water is absorbed at an increasingly faster pace. The place left after the water is absorbed becomes a damp rim which can still be seen close to the surface of the water for some time.

It is more or less verifiable that in ethnically mixed villages where the Hungarian population still comprised approximately 50 individuals a century ago, our informants' network of connections still contains one or two living acquaintances whose family history can be traced back to the already empty territory. In places where the Hungarian community was represented by only 10–20 people a century ago, locals still have knowledge about them, but living witnesses can hardly be found anymore, and in cases where the population vanished earlier, only sparse bits of data are available and researchers must rely exclusively on historical sources.

In any case, using historical sources and/or collective memory as a basis, we can see that the borders of the region are constantly changing; villages that are presumably not part of the regional structure today may have been integral parts of it 100–200 years ago. (Alongside the ones that still exist, our map of marriage ties also indicates some former connections that can still be verified in collective memory. Figure 4.)

Taking all of this into consideration, we might ask how valid is to use the term “Kalotaszeg” in this variable and ever-changing system? As a unit, aspects of historical data, networks of connection and structures of local identity (self-determination) enable us to sense that this primarily geographic–historical regional structure, which can be delineated according to religious–ethnic parameters, has been under development since the Middle-Ages, presenting a mosaic consisting of several micro-regions, the elements of

⁴⁰ In addition to the cases mentioned earlier, we have chosen to describe only one significant example on the edge of the Alszege sub-region. Located on the north-western border of Kalotaszeg, the village of Középlak was once the mother church of “Tamásfalva” (officially called Almástamási), a formerly Hungarian settlement that certainly belonged to the Alszege at some point and its Hungarian population having completely disappeared by the 20th century. Today, hardly any trace remains of the destroyed church of otherwise medieval origin. The heirlooms from Tamásfalva (2 pewter chalices and 2 platters) were transferred to the mother-church of Középlak. (The inscription on one of the platters says that it belonged to the Reformed Church of Tamásfalva in 1764 “*Tamasfalvi Reformata Ecclesiae A. 1764*”.) A local history written in 1842 bears witness to the fact that Hungarians lived there and also that the village was considered to be part of historical Kalotaszeg. “*Tamási is a Hungarian–Romanian village with fertile soil*” belonging to Kalotaszeg (TÉGLÁSI 1891: 138.) The so-called “*Family Book*” [Családkönyv] in Középlak under the heading “*Population Census of Tamásfalva, 1870*” lists by name the total of 9 families i.e. 35 Hungarian persons. In 1910, only 14 Hungarians were living among 595 Orthodox Romanians. (KLINGHAMMER 2000: 89) As we walked through the village, locals showed us the Hungarian cemetery, where only 2 vandalised grave-markers were standing in 2000. The name “*Nemes*” (which means “Noble” in Hungarian) can still be found as a Romanian family name in the village.

which did not always identify with one another (or not at all), or formed in keeping with criteria entirely different from what we may assume on the basis of our knowledge today. Usage of the name “Kalotaszeg” has its own history as well, its content changing within a diachronic cross-section of time.

LAYERS OF KALOTASZEG-IDENTITY AND MENTAL MAPS OF HIERARCHIC STRUCTURE OF THE REGION

Based on the characteristics of the fine internal micro-regional structure of the area outlined by the network of marriage ties as well as the self-proclaimed identity of locals and their image of others, it is possible to separate and verify three layers of Kalotaszeg consciousness. On the level of hypothesis, we suggest the following terminology: *Old Kalotaszeg* awareness is present in the western half of the region, including Felszeg and Alszeg. *New Kalotaszegians* comprise the (Hungarian Calvinist peasant-origin) inhabitants of the territory east of the Körös and Szamos watershed up to Cluj including the Nádas Valley. We use the term *Latest Kalotaszegians* to distinguish three villages in the Fenes Valley⁴¹ located to the southwest of Cluj and the village of Kajántó, north of Cluj.

Our most important criteria included the age, cohesion and structure of regional identity among local inhabitants. (We should emphasize that it was not the age of local identity that we focused on; – the Hungarian villages in the region have been existing since the early Middle-Ages and have been recorded via written documents since the 13th century.) A comparison of grass-roots identities revealed a unique system of relationships according to which local residents rank themselves as belonging to the larger region of Kalotaszeg. We discovered various levels of self-categorization, and it is primarily on this basis that we feel justified in using the three terms listed above. In addition, we are able to support our suggestions with numerous aspects of social, economic and ecclesiastical history not detailed here.

New and old layers of Kalotaszeg identity:

We encountered comments like the following everywhere in the Nádasmente (Nádas Valley area *New Kalotaszeg*): “Kalotaszeg was up there in the Felszeg, in Kalotaszentkirály, it started after Körösfő and Zsobok. We’re part of the section along Nádas River.” Viewed from Nádasmente, it is said that Kalotaszeg starts further away west of them. They admit, acknowledge and respect the precedence of Felszeg and Alszeg, which they regard as the “genuine old Kalotaszeg.” Even so, they primarily refer to themselves as “Nádasmentians”, even among the generation born during the 1930s and 40s.

Historic data also support this view. Historically, the area reaching east close to Cluj was not considered to be part of Kalotaszeg. It was only after the ethnographic discovery of local folk art during the 19th and 20th centuries that the name was expanded to include other sub- and micro-regions on the basis of cultural traits. In the same way, the ethnographic borders of Kalotaszeg change from author to author, vacillating between 30–50 villages.

⁴¹ Magyarfenes, Tordaszentlászló, Magyarléta.

József Téglási Ercsey, the first to describe the region of Kalotaszeg in 1842, went beyond the Hungarian villages of Felszeg and counted in purely Romanian settlements, but omitted several of the Hungarian settlements in the area, listing a total of 44 communities from the Western. (TÉGLÁSI 1891:98, 112, 113, 126, 137, 138) At the time, the eastern regions were not yet part of his research. Téglási's perspective shows that the meaning of the expression "Kalotaszeg" during the middle of the 19th century still corresponded to the term used to denote the historical region in previous centuries designating a given unit of public and economic administration from which settlements had not yet been omitted. Ethnic and cultural aspects did not play a role in this description (which essentially correlated with the traditional premodern view of contemporary multiethnic historical Hungary).

It took exactly 50 years for this view to change – not yet in the consciousness of local inhabitants, but due to the insights of an influential ethnographer. János Jankó was the first monographer of Kalotaszeg in 1892 and conducted research on 34 villages. (JANKÓ 1993: 4–5) He did not include the Romanian villages in his studies. In harmony with the view held by the local Hungarian population, Jankó only considered the Hungarian populace to be part of Kalotaszeg, in spite of the fact that he was familiar with Ercsey Téglási's work. On the other hand, his research was not limited exclusively to those Hungarian communities that his energetic contemporaries among the gentry-origin intelligentsia of the region, Zsigmond Gyarmathy and wife, attempted to present to the general public of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and where they painstakingly developed the domestic arts movement.⁴² An older academic, Antal Herrmann, was the one who persuaded Jankó to cross from Felszeg to another valley to the pleasant bathing location of Jegénye, and from there he was only one step away from discovering Nádasmente and the Kapus Valley, a territory which he then included within a new, spreading concept of "Kalotaszeg" obviously based on aspects of ethnography. Villages in the South-East subregion in the Fenes Valley, however, did not appear on his map, although his writing indicates that he collected information there as well.

In parallel with the scholarly discoveries of János Jankó came an intensive period in the "discovery" of folk art in Kalotaszeg, and with the effective support of elite circles and the art world of the Monarchy, Jankó was able to garner a widespread reputation for the region, where the budding network of domestic industry made great efforts to keep up with the increased level of interest.⁴³ The Malonyay art team⁴⁴ essentially followed the trail blazed by Jankó, the only difference being that they also studied the Romanian village of Magyarnádas in the Nádas valley, thus adding a 35th village to Jankó's original 34 Hungarian settlements. (Figure 5) Magyarnádas was the postal and railway centre and headquarters of the local constabulary, so the artists' visit was presumably not guided by any concept, but

⁴² E.g. Bánffyhunyd, Magyarbikal, Magyargyerőmonostor.

⁴³ Our task is not to outline this phenomenon, even superficially. The issue is addressed from a number of perspectives in lectures published in connection with the exhibition at the Museum of Ethnography entitled "Kalotaszeg – The Discovery of Folk Art". *Néprajzi Értesítő* [Ethnographic Bulletin] LXXX, 1998

⁴⁴ These artists primarily belonged to the circle of artists working at the Secessionist art colony in Gödöllő. They travelled the region at the beginning of the 20th century and published richly illustrated volumes entitled "Art of the Hungarian People", greatly boosting the discovery of contemporary folk art. The first volume in this influential series presented Kalotaszeg, which had by then already developed an increasingly strong reputation. (MALONYAI 1907)

merely due to the fact that they already took care of business their anyway. The book entitled *Kalotaszeg*, written by Károly Kós Sr. in 1937, emphasises Felszeg (SW), Alszeg (NW) and Nádasmente (NE) as the main sub-regions, but also mentions the southeast territory the Fenes Valley as well (Kós 1937: 5).

It is not by accident that we are focusing here on ethnographic works intended for the general public. These publications were strongly responsible for forming the image of *Kalotaszeg* in public consciousness. The interaction that subsequently occurred between the fields of literature and ethnography, and between public and local consciousness is a story of continuous evolution. (Figure 6, 7, 8)

In the period of time since János Jankó conducted his research, the field of ethnography achieved a much debated but widely recognized consensus regarding the terminology used to divide the sub-regions of *Kalotaszeg*, which was often a source of professional anxiety.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, following the turn of the last century, the profession clearly regarded Nádasmente (on the northeast) to be part of *Kalotaszeg*, despite the fact that locals held a different view of themselves. As a newfound “*Kalotaszeg*-consciousness” gained strength among Nádasmentians during the second half of the 20th century, “Nádasmente-consciousness” simultaneously faded and became secondary.

This shift in identity was primarily influenced by outside impulses, including ones not mentioned above: the “*Gyöngyösbokréta*” [‘Pearly Bouquet’] dance movement⁴⁶ in Hungary, which was also organized in northern Transylvania in 1940–44; ethnographic research conducted in Nádasmente by the Hungarian Scouting Association⁴⁷ and ethnographic and linguistic studies conducted by the University of Sciences in Kolozsvár.⁴⁸

Later during the period of Socialism in Romania in the 1970s and 80s, the widely read Hungarian language minority press as well as magazines in Hungary regularly published reports on Nádasmente as part of “*Kalotaszeg*.”⁴⁹ At home in the villages of Nádas Valley famous about their stunning folk costume, proudly guarded photo reports from the Hungarian magazine “*Nők Lapja*” [Women’s Journal] and reverently framed cover portraits by the well-known photographer Péter Korniss testify to the fact that the impact of this period on self-identity can not be ignored. (Figure 8)

Following in the footsteps of music and dance researchers, the dance-house (*táncház*) movement of the late 1970s and early 80s in Hungary and Transylvania brought lots of visitors to the “sacred” sites of “*Kalotaszeg*” music and dance (primarily Méra, Vista and Inaktelke of the Nádas Valley region), where not a single wedding feast could take place without guests from Budapest enjoying the hospitality of famous families. (BALOGH – FÜLEMILE 2008)

⁴⁵ E.g. KÜRTI 2000.

⁴⁶ During the 1930s and 40s, Budapest journalist Béla Paulini organised a chain of cultural preservation groups among villages in Hungary that still kept relatively traditional styles of peasant costume, dance and music culture. These groups regularly performed in Budapest during the national celebrations on St. Stephen’s Day, the most important national holiday.

⁴⁷ Museum of Ethnography, EA 21591, Results of Village History Questionnaire, Hungarian National Scouting Association, Pál Teleki Tour, 1943, Report (manuscript)

⁴⁸ In 1940–1944 Northern part of Transylvania was annexed back to Hungary. The university in Kolozsvár was also reorganised by Hungary. A great deal of scholarly interest in archaeology, linguistics, history and ethnography was directed toward Transylvania during the brief four years.

⁴⁹ E. g. see: KESZEG – POZSONY 2001: item 534.

In the relatively prosperous early period of Romanian socialism (1960s, early 1970s), income derived from industrial work was pumped back into the local community, resulting in an unparalleled period of thriving culture in Nádásmente, which was also apparent in the revival of construction (stone and brick houses, stone and iron gates), furniture painting, and the glitter and ornamentation of folk costumes. This delayed and overwhelming desire for decoration and a rise in the prestige of abundant material culture appeared during an anachronistically late period when other areas were threatened by the dissolution and disintegration of peasant culture.

The romantic nature of this late surge in cultural preservation brought floods of adherents to Transylvanian communities, and the consequent rise in the value of tradition inspired a conscious Kalotaszeg identity in Nádásmente. "It was really all this tourism that told everybody that we're part of Kalotaszeg." In Méra, locals expressed themselves with pride: "They've stopped wearing costumes in Felszeg. There they just take them out of the trunk. Here in Nádásmente, folk dress is alive and developing. It's only here that you can still find the real Kalotaszeg folk art."

The latest to adopt a Kalotaszeg regional identity

The suggested term *Latest Kalotaszeg* denotes the South-eastern micro-region in the Fenes River Valley and the secluded Kajántó to the north of Cluj.

Among the villages of the Fenes Valley the folk dress of Magyarfenés, Tordaszentlászló, and Magyarléta, is quite different from the Kalotaszeg style of the settlements mentioned above.⁵⁰ Looking from the Nádásmente, these villages are regarded thus: "They're not so much like Kalotaszeg as we are." Magyarlóna, which is located near the main road at the gate of the valley, associates itself rather with Nádásmente.⁵¹ In Magyarlóna, locals clearly regard themselves as part of Kalotaszeg, yet they claim the following as well: "But we're on the edge". Regarding Magyarfenés and Tordaszentlászló, the residents of Lóna have trouble deciding: "They're different. There were marriages, but their dress is different." "They went for blue." But when we go deeper in the valley to the South in the next village, in Magyarfenés locals also rank themselves with Kalotaszeg, but when commenting on Magyarléta, which is the village farthest to the South, they declare: "Anything beyond Léta is not Kalotaszeg anymore, but Léta is already more like part of the Havas Mountains." "Romanians belong to the Havas."

The regional awareness of Fenes Valley inhabitants is less certain; they can firmly declare that the Catholic Szászfenés, Gyalu and the surrounding Romanian population are not part of Kalotaszeg, but while Léta considers itself Kalotaszegian, the neighbors Lóna and Fenes are unsure about Léta. Locals also have a hard time deciding about the cultural identity of Tordaszentlászló (next to Léta) as well.

We experienced a coherent regional awareness in Felszeg and Alszeg (*Old Kalotaszeg*), where everyone can list members of the group, and in their intent to focus on the "real Kalotaszeg", the people of Nádásmente are in turn able to list the villages in Alszeg and

⁵⁰ The blue, cross-stitched, sleeves of shirts and different solutions for headdress and aprons clearly distinguish them from other regions of Kalotaszeg.

⁵¹ Lóna primarily compares itself to the Nádásmente. "We're similar to Türe and Vista, but our dress isn't so fancy." "Those in the other valley (meaning Nádásmente) are different, fancier."

Felszeg. Nor is there any debate in Nádasmente concerning how far the area extends and which villages belong to it, yet the inhabitants of the Fenes Valley display uncertainty. This contradiction in terms of self-categorization and the ranking of others indicates that a kind of very new, learned Kalotaszeg consciousness is characteristic of the villages along the Fenes.

Kajántó (one single Hungarian ethnic enclave North of Cluj) even admits to its new Kalotaszeg awareness: "We just kind of became Kalotaszegians." "We stole their style of dress, too." "We shifted toward Kalotaszeg." "We're not really set in Kalotaszeg."

With respect to its marital connections and material culture, the small Hungarian Calvinist peasant community of Kajántó aligned itself with the villages of Nádasmente rather in the 20th century, despite the fact that it is actually located in another valley along north of Cluj.⁵² Kajántó also seems to be a secluded part of an earlier circle of Calvinist marriage ties that sought connections in the direction of Nádasmente, when it became isolated from an ethnic and a social point of view having had Hungarian neighbors only in villages who identified themselves with the lesser nobility and did not mix with other strata for social reasons. Yet the 9-kilometre distant Cluj offered numerous opportunities for mobility.

Kajántó covers a relatively large territory and the quality of its soil is quite high. Many did business by selling grain. Animal husbandry and dairy farming were also important. Stone-masons from Kajántó were well-known in the area. All of this meant that they enjoyed a relatively high standard of living. It should be noted precisely for this reason that this tiny handful of Calvinist peasantry did not undergo the "slumization" experienced by other bed-room communities within the agglomeration of larger cities, but consciously retained its peasant identity while seeking contact with Hungarian villages in Nádasmente.

Belated efforts by Kajántó to preserve its peasant traditions in the 20th century are similar to the socio-historical phenomenon in which a conscious cultural conservatism enabled peasant communities within a "circle of gardens" around large modernizing cities in the late 19th and during the 20th century to become suppliers of the urban food industry. The impact of urbanization on these communities – the "us and them" opposition – did not immediately lead to discoloration and self-rendering, but in fact reinforced a conscious self-image manifested in "traditional" forms of outward expression – at least for a time – during an age already filled with contradiction.⁵³

The dress style often seems to be a decisive proof of belonging. In any case, there is a consensus among all the communities in the region about the criteria (not including territory) that provide the basis for deciding who belongs to Kalotaszeg. As it was earlier mentioned the foremost is Hungarian identity along with the Calvinist faith. The second most important criterion for defining Kalotaszegians is that they are peasants. But another essential criterion expressed everywhere is the presence of the particular regional style

⁵² Kajántó was characterised by significant mobility among its residents during the 20th century, primarily due to labour need in the local brick factory and the close proximity of Kolozsvár. By 1992, both the Romanian and the Hungarian population had gradually decreased to half of the total in 1930. Today, approximately 20% of inhabitants are Hungarian, including 365 Calvinists and 65 Catholics.

⁵³ The same can be said of the 20th century traditionalism in peasant communities like Méra, Vista, Magyarlóna, Györgyfalva and Hóstát, which were part of the same "circle of gardens" as Kajántó and which maintained labour/market contacts with Cluj/Kolozsvár.

folk dress. “Kalotaszeg is what it is because of its style of dress, “Kalotaszeg is best distinguished by its clothing.” claimed unanimously in every sub-region. (The prominent role of dress as a form of identification that expresses both internal and external borders between groups is well known among researchers of peasant culture.) Residents of villages that consider themselves to be part of Kalotaszeg assess their own identity as well as that of others on the basis of costume style. Their comparisons take into account various differences between certain elements of clothing, noting whether they are present at all or missing, which further deepens each group’s analysis of the other.

Calvinist peasants in Kajántó, for example, express their Kalotaszeg ranking in the following way: “We’ve moved towards Kalotaszeg”, “we stole the style”, “We weren’t really Kalotaszeg”, “we were just regarded that way.” The fact that the *párta* (a crescent shaped maiden headdress) is no longer worn locally is mentioned in such a way as to suggest that the vain of such accessory is a sign of defect; since there is no doubt that they regard the *párta* as an emblematic attribute of Kalotaszeg style. Even regarding elements of Kalotaszeg clothing worn by Romanians, both local Romanians and Hungarians mention that Romanians do not wear *párta*.

It is worth comparing what each local group considers to be the beginning of the Kalotaszeg territory and also where they rank themselves. Starting in the East with settlements close to Cluj each of them looks to the West to the direction of Felszeg, (*Old Kalotaszeg*). They claim themselves to be the starting point of the region, excluding neighbours to the East and including those to the West. It has the pattern of “domino fall”. Villagers in Lóna look back to West towards the region that is most certainly considered to be Kalotaszeg and compare themselves to Nagykapus. The residents of Nagykapus acknowledge this and rank themselves accordingly, but omit Lóna, which lies farther to the East and glance back in the direction of Felszeg and observe their counterparts in Gyerővásárhely. Going farther west again, in Gyerővásárhely, at the edge of Felszeg, it is said about the first village towards Felszeg that: “The real Kalotaszeg begins after Körösfő.” The same tendency can be seen in the other valley as well. The chain reaction is simple to trace: All things considered, villagers in Kajántó observe and follow the example of their counterparts in Nádasmente (Méra and Vista) to the West. Conscious attention is focused on some larger model-like communities that have been regarded as part of Kalotaszeg for a longer period of time, and which enjoy greater prestige, perhaps for this very reason. Vista’s point of reference is nearby Mákó to the West, which is the village with the highest long-standing prestige in Nádasmente. Meanwhile residents of Vista are also well-informed about the network of contacts in Felszeg and Alszeg, take them into account and there is no debate about the precedence of Alszeg in comparison to Nádasmente.

Within Alszeg, they observe Sztána and Zsobok, both of which enjoy respect and are visited more often due to their close proximity to the railroad. In addition, everyone in Vista knows that Kispetri is the wealthiest village.⁵⁴ In addition, it respects Felszeg as number one in the hierarchy of Kalotaszegians and considers Kalotaszegkirály to be a manifestation of real Kalotaszeg style. Its attention is also drawn to wealthy Körösfő and the market-town Bánffyhunyd.

⁵⁴ Several maps included in the book dealing with folk costumes (FARAGÓ – NAGY – VÁMSZER 1977) clearly illustrate the observation of Felszeg and Alszeg from the perspective of Nádasmente.

The term “Kalotaszeg”, which originally designated a historical micro-region – and which the population of the original territory (Felszeg) has accepted and made their own – was gradually spreading to other micro-regions. The degree of self-definition is either stronger and more “confident” or weaker, depending on how early or late a given micro-region began to adopt the term. The length of time that precedence has lasted or the time that has elapsed since “entrance” also set an order of hierarchy in the relationship between micro-regions. (While a more significant sense of the Kalotaszeg concept can be felt in the case of Alszege, reaching to at least the 17th–18th century – precisely due to a mutual history of public administration and land ownership with Felszeg – the concept in Nádasmente is undoubtedly a new one that came from the outside.)

SUMMARY

Our aim was to explore the factors which shape the formation of historical identity-regions and more specifically how regional identity was related to an expanding network of marriage ties. Our research involved an examination of a continuously shrinking territory of Hungarian ethnicity in order to explore the internal structures that can be outlined on the basis of human relationships formed within the given space and in light of conscious regional awareness among locals. In certain cases, smaller structures designate themselves, in other cases they do not, but at the same time, self-definition can certainly be assumed in terms of how participants place themselves and others along relational coordinates.

Circles of marriage ties are fundamental, integrative units of larger (than a local community) scale grass-roots social structures which comprises the densest network contacts based on personal interaction. The significant events of human life shared in the sphere of celebration via relational bonds, taste and appearance, correlating knowledge of folk customs and ensemble of objects involved, orientation in the world, values and the formation of opinions are all important factors that not only had an impact on the given familial relationships, but also comprised the cultural environment in which participants of the marriage circle developed a community. Bonds were not necessarily formed only between neighboring villages that maintained a continuous spatial contact with one another. Local societies were able to extend social, religious and ethnic bonds in various directions towards distant communities as well. This means that in many cases local bonds were often crossed by structures that integrated groups in accordance with priorities specific to certain social strata. Unless some drastic historical event interfered, marriage circles established through existing networks of contact and self-definition provided solid ground for the formation of human connections, influencing local genetic traits as well as the development of typical family names for several centuries. These traditional networks of contact and its mental and cultural projections have in certain cases determined the spatial orientation of people, the direction of their movement, their identity and their knowledge and opinions concerning their environment since the Middle-Ages, but it is only a matter of time before the point is reached where they can no longer be traced.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Systematic collectivization throughout Eastern-Europe in the late 1950s and the early 1960s initiated a flood of change in the region. The appropriation of land and agricultural tools immediately brought about the

Based on the research challenge and the methodology that we have concluded on as a result of our work in the region, we believe that the specific example of Kalotaszeg can also provide useful lessons in gaining a better general understanding of systematic examination of networks and regional identity in other regions as well.

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disintegration of previous patterns of life and social structure as well as the traditional family farms which provided their foundation. Forced mobilization towards cities and industrial centers also led to the rapid deterioration of traditional bonds and circles of marriage and inevitably accelerated decay of traditional peasant culture. While this process of disintegration could essentially be regarded as complete in Hungary by the 1980s, in certain areas of Transylvania it was delayed by 10–20 years and still continues to occur in the present. In addition to many other factors, it was the radical personality cult and isolationism of the Ceausescu regime during the late socialist period in Romania as well as the strict shortage economy of the 1980s that conserved and slowed socio-economic and cultural processes in the region. Following the political transition of 1989, and Romania's EU membership from 2007 however, the pace of modernization and globalization increased in Romania as well in areas that had previously remained somewhat relatively traditional, including Kalotaszeg.

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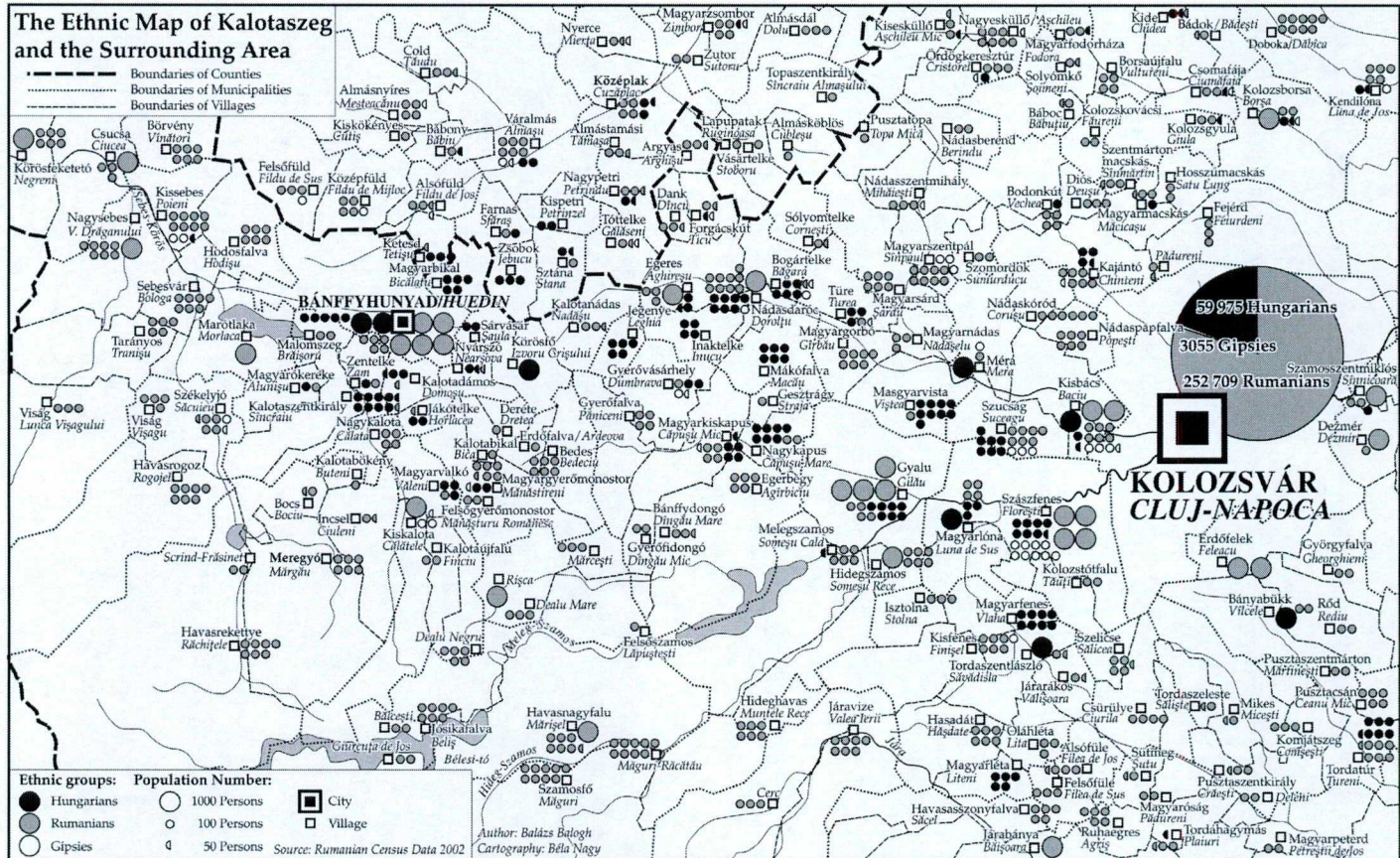


Figure 1: Ethnic Map of Kalotaszeg and the Surrounding Area, 2002 (Cartography by NAGY, Béla)

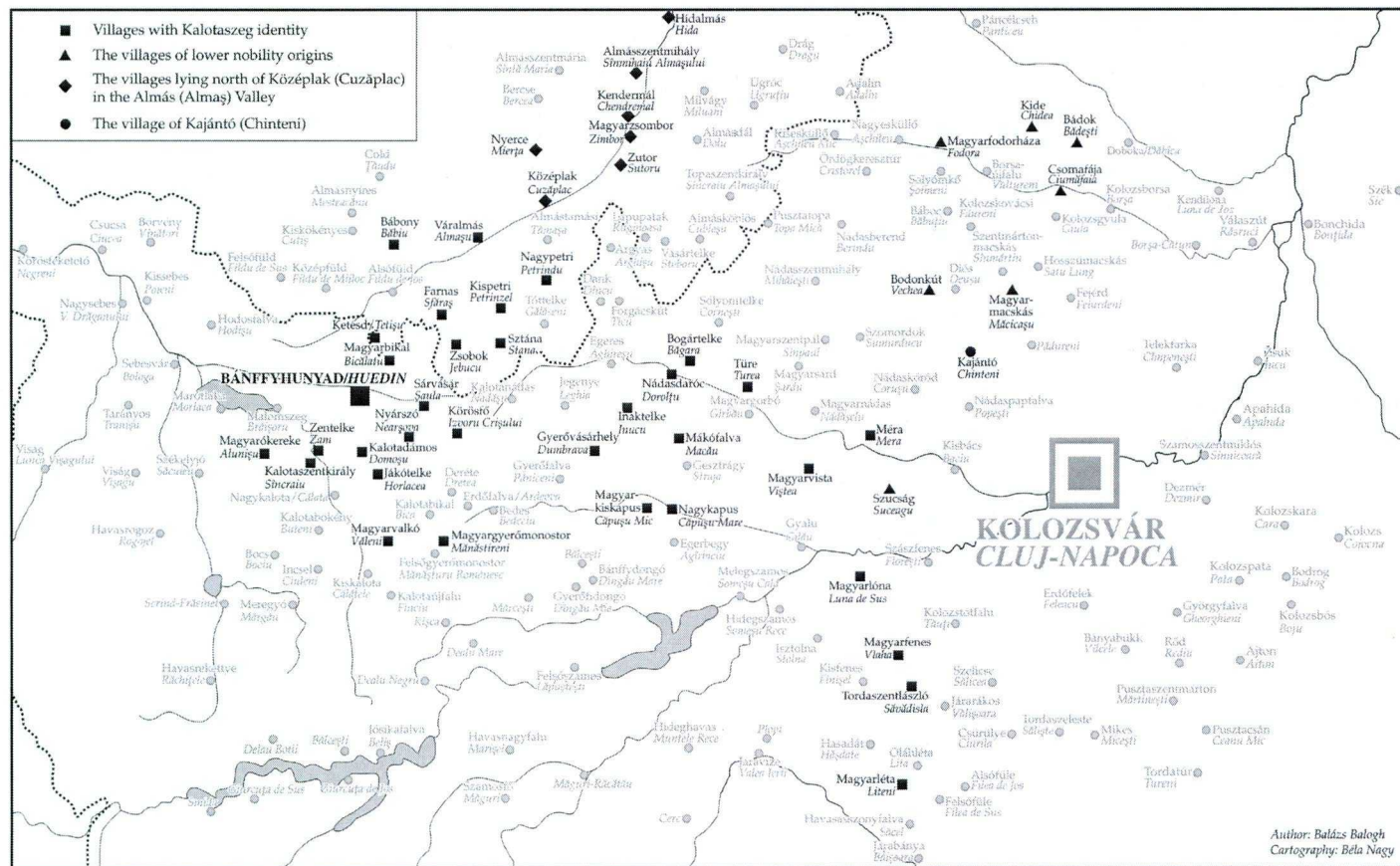


Figure 2: Map of Villages with (Certain Degree) of Kalotaszeg Identity (Cartography by NAGY, Béla)

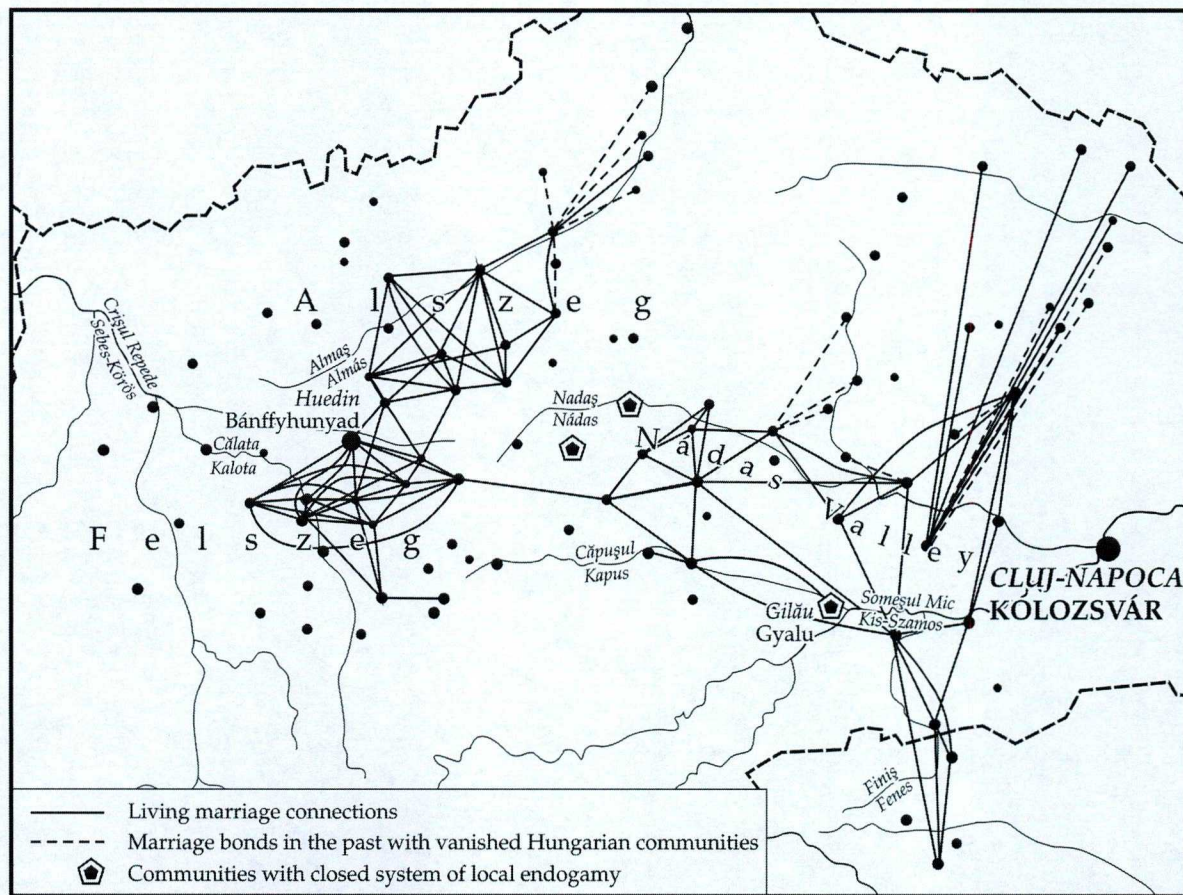


Figure 3: Basic Spatial Structure of System of Marriage Ties of the Hungarian Population of Kalotaszeg Region and the Surrounding Area in the Middle of the 20th Century (Cartography by NAGY, Béla)

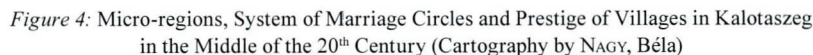


Figure 4: Micro-regions, System of Marriage Circles and Prestige of Villages in Kalotaszeg in the Middle of the 20th Century (Cartography by NAGY, Béla)



KALOTASZEGI NŐI ÉS FÉRFI VISELET (KÖRÖSFŐ, B.-HUNYAD, MAGYARÓKERKEKE, MÁKÓ) (V. tb. b.)

Figure 5: Illustration from the First Famous Album on Kalotaszeg folk art produced by the Artists of the Gödöllő Colony (MALONYAY 1907: color table V b, between pp 48-49)



Figure 6: Home Industry Exhibition of Textile Works from Kalotaszeg, Organized by Mrs. Gyula Kónya, Wife of the Calvinist Minister of Magyarvalkó in the 1930s. (Photo in private collection)



Figure 7: Inhabitants of Market Town of Bánffyhunyad on a Public Political Celebration in September of 1940 (Photo in private collection)



Figure 8: "Wedding at Körösfő", Press-photo of a Report by Rétvári, László (?) in the Popular Magazine Ország-Világ, cc. 1979 (Cut out in private collection)